



LONDON FIRE SERVICE.

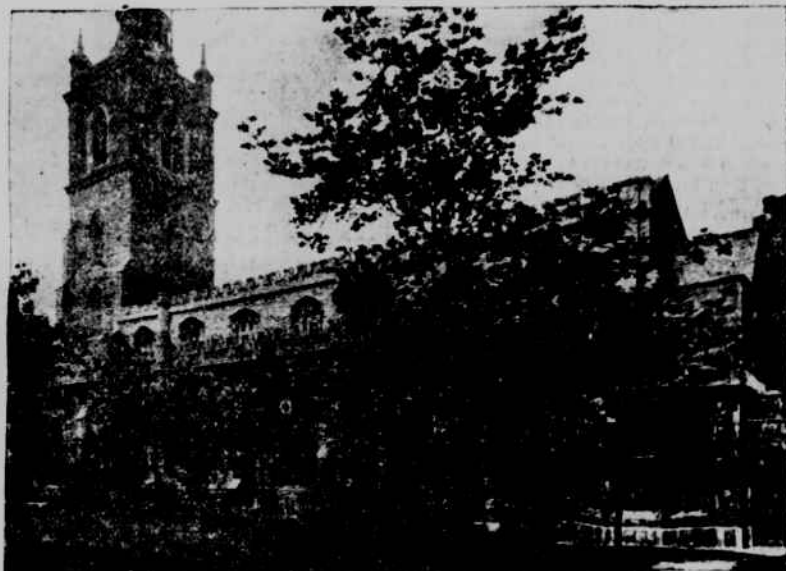
UNFAIR CRITICISM OF THE METROPOLITAN BRIGADE—REAL MORALS OF THE CRIPPLEGATE FIRE.

London, November 23.
A municipal insurance department has been advocated by some of the most daring municipal collectivist in the United Kingdom. They have contended that insurance companies are highly favored corporations in well-governed localities where fires seldom occur, and that they ought not to be allowed to make so much money as they do. The remedy suggested is a branch of the public service, which will take charge of the insurance business in a city and turn the profits into the municipal treasury. Glasgow has tried many venturesome experiments in municipal socialism, but it has not undertaken to increase public revenues and to lower taxation by monopolizing the business.



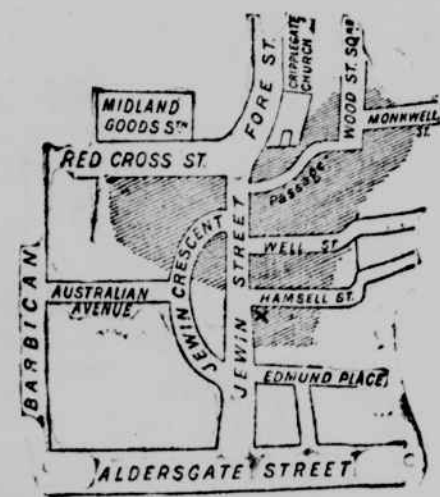
COMMANDER WELLS OF THE LONDON FIRE BRIGADE.

of insuring its own citizens against risks of fire. London has suddenly learned by bitter experience that, while it has enjoyed for half a century a remarkable degree of immunity from large fires, it is not, as Sir John Hutton once described it, a paradise for insurance companies. Even if the metropolis were not at least two generations behind Glasgow in municipal socialism, the Cripple-gate fire would be an insuperable barrier against collectivist schemes of insurance at public profit.
The London Fire Brigade has been, since its



ST. GILES'S CHURCH, CRIPPLEGATE, LONDON.
(The London Stereoscopic and Photographic Co., Ltd.)

organization by the Metropolitan Board of Works, the most popular branch of the local administration. Its efficiency and the discipline of the force have been generally extolled, and practical experience has seemed to justify high praise. The Tooley-st. fire in 1861 and the Wood-st. fire in 1882 have been the only great disasters of the half-century until the Cripple-gate calamity. During recent years the metropolis, with a population of five millions and an area of 600 square miles, has been well protected against fire. There have not been more than a dozen serious fires in any year since



THE LONDON FIRE.
Map showing district burned.

1855, and not infrequently the number has been nearer six than twelve. The average loss of life from this cause has been remarkably low, only seven large theatres having been burned during that period, and the life-saving exploits of the firemen in tenement fires being conspicuous for gallantry and self-possession. London has been well served by its Fire Brigade, and at a low cost. The expense of the department has been about one-half of the cost of the New-York service, and less than that of either Boston or Chicago; and the losses from fire have been much smaller than those from the same cause in American cities having only a fraction of the population of London.

The Cripple-gate fire has started the community with a sense of its insecurity and promoted critical reflection upon the resources and efficiency of the Fire Brigade. As Commander Wells and his brilliant men were considered prompt in responding to the call and untiring in their exertions, they escape criticism and are generally commended for courage and persistent fighting power; but there is a disposition among insurance managers and writers for the press to condemn the methods as old-fashioned and behind the times, and to reproach the London County Council for neglecting to provide better appliances and engines and to increase the force of workers. It is a great public convenience whenever anything goes wrong to be

HOLLANDER'S

290 FIFTH AVENUE.

GREAT BARGAINS

To be found for this week only, as the balance of the stock unsold is to be sent to our Boston house for a similar sale the following Monday.

ON 2D FLOOR. ALL OF OUR MODEL GOWNS

For STREET, RECEPTION and EVENING WEAR, Comprising the most elegant assortment we have ever imported. In no case more than

HALF THEIR COST

And in Many Much Less.

ON 1ST FLOOR.

MANTLES AND COATS, TAILOR-MADE SUITS, and many other Simpler Gowns than our Imported Models ALL MARKED WAY DOWN AT CLEARING SALE PRICES.

This sale usually comes in January, but we have decided that the time to offer these rich goods is while there is a season ahead for using them and thereby receiving better value.

able to saddle the responsibility upon a representative municipal body like the County Council. Lord Salisbury and his reactionary colleagues will deprive the community of this inestimable privilege if they carry out their design of degrading and abolishing the County Council.

THE METROPOLITAN FIRE BRIGADE.

The Metropolitan Board of Works was superseded by the County Council about nine years ago, and during that period there has been a remarkable increase in the resources for fighting fire. There are now 24,000 hydrants in place of 9,000, and 583 fire-alarms instead of 358. The working force has been increased from 677 to 285 officers and men, with 515 on watch every twenty-four hours, and the number of street, engine, fire-escape, hose-cart and ladder-truck stations has run up from 216 to 350. Large additions have also been made to the appliances in use, including 11 steam engines and 56 hose-carts and ladder-trucks. The Fire Brigade, so far from being neglected by the County Council, has been greatly strengthened in every respect, and the percentage of serious fires in the whole number has fallen from 7 to 3 per cent in nine years.

sition. It had in reserve about eighty manual engines, but these would have been of little use in fighting so unmanageable a fire.

Whether London, with its vast area, needs a larger force of firemen and an increased number of engines is a detail which experts alone can decide; but familiarity with the burned district induces me to believe that Commander Wells could not have used advantageously either more engines or more men in so cramped a street space as was at his disposal. The charge that the Brigade employ primitive appliances and is behind the times is based mainly on the use of horses in drawing engines and the lack of chemical machines and water-towers. In these respects the service can undoubtedly be greatly improved. The electric alarm system is excellent, and the general policy of spreading the force over as large an area as possible, instead of concentrating it in the most crowded portions of the city, is judicious. If American fire officials display superior energy and powers of rapid decision in great emergencies, it is because they have more experience in managing large fires, and have learned to fight at the centre and to blow up buildings when radical measures are necessary. Commander Wells and his force will unquestionably profit by their experience in Cripple-gate, and will conduct a bolder and more scientific campaign another time, and if they are wise they will also have chemical engines and water-towers.

REAL MORALS OF CRIPPLEGATE.

All these details are, however, non-essential. What was needed at Cripple-gate was neither an increased number of appliances nor a radical change of methods, but a greater pressure of water. Glasgow can give useful hints to London in this respect. The storage reservoir of the abundant Loch Katrine supply being 200 feet above the town, the pressure is so great that ordinarily firemen do not use engines there, but simply turn on the water from the hydrants and there is force enough to carry it to any requisite height. This is the secret of the remarkable experience of Glasgow in having an immunity from serious fires while maintaining a small brigade at low expense. It is the second city in the United Kingdom, and its fire department, with less than one hundred men, costs about \$75,000 a year. There are only nine or ten steam engines in the service and they are seldom worked at fires, because the hydrant pressure suffices. If there had been the same water pressure at Cripple-gate, one-half of the engines might have been dispensed with and the resources for fighting the flames would have been vastly increased. London will have to go far afield for a new water supply before it can have the same sense of security which Glasgow enjoys.

Moreover, the street formation at once facilitated the spread of the flames and prevented effective campaigning by the Fire Brigade. Cripple-gate is one of the oldest sections of London, and the blind alleys and narrow lanes which were once lined with houses outside the



THE LONDON FIRE.
View of the burned district from St. Giles's Churchyard, Cripple-gate, showing bastion of old Roman wall.
(The London Stereoscopic and Photographic Co., Ltd.)

city walls have remained unchanged. The houses were replaced with tall warehouses huddled close together in a maze of darkened courts and blind passages. There could not have been a more dangerous district, nor one where an organized force of firemen would be at greater disadvantage in staying the spread of flames. The best brigade in the world with all the superior mechanism invented in America would have been powerless to protect so overcrowded and inflammable an area occupied with great warehouses filled with highly inflammable merchandise. There are many equally dangerous districts in the heart of old London. Glasgow, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and other English cities have condemned similar areas, straightened and widened the streets, and reconstructed the buildings with incombustible materials and don having lagged behind in the municipal movement and submitted to the intolerable narrowness of vestry rule and Guild privilege, neglected to minimize the dangers of intricate

B. Altman & Co.

Upholstery, Lace Curtains and Draperies

On Monday, December 5th, the following will be offered at extraordinary low prices:

THIRD FLOOR.

Irish Point Curtains, per pair, \$5.85
Renaissance Curtains, per pair, 5.85
Satin Derby Portieres, per pair (12 different colors), 7.90
French Velour Portieres, per pair, 12.75

SPECIAL FOR MONDAY ONLY.

1,500 Tapestry, Velour and Satin Damask Cushion Tops, 48c. 65c. AND 95c.
600 24-inch White Down Cushions, covered with Lonsdale Cambric, at 98c.
Regular Price, \$1.68

Eighteenth Street, Nineteenth Street and Sixth Avenue.

B. Altman & Co.

LADIES' CLOAKS.

Velour Coats, elaborately embroidered in jet; trimmed with Persian Lamb Fur, Value, \$42.00 \$29.00

Tailor Coats, of fine Black Kersey cloth, with shaded taffeta silk lining, Value \$19.50 \$13.50

Top Coats, of Black Cheviot or Kersey cloth, lined with silk, Value, \$15.00 \$10.75

SPECIAL SALE OF BLACK AND COLORED DRESS PATTERNS FOR PRESENTS,

including—
3,000 of Black Mohair Brilliantine, 54 inches wide, at \$3.25, \$3.75 and \$4.35 Per Pattern.
Regular Value, \$5.10 to \$6.80

Eighteenth Street, Nineteenth Street and Sixth Avenue.

B. Altman & Co.

STERLING SILVER

Mounted on the newest designs of Cut Glass.

Punch Bowls, . . . \$80.00 to \$300.00
Claret Jugs, . . . 15.00 " 65.00
Cracker Jars, . . . 12.00 " 20.00
Cigar Jars, . . . 3.75 " 20.00
Salts Bottles, . . . 75c. " 15.00

SPECIAL—MONDAY.

Deep Cut Bowls, \$15.00
Sterling Silver Rims.
Deep Cut Cigar Jars, 6.00
Sterling Silver Covers.
Cut Glass Salts Bottles, 2.00
Sterling Silver Handles.
Deep Cut Glass Water Jugs, 15.00
Sterling Silver Mounted.
Fancy Cut Claret Jugs, 16.00
Sterling Silver Mounted.
Cut Glass Cracker Jars, 11.50
Sterling Silver Covers.

B. Altman & Co.

FANCY LINEN DEPT.

USEFUL PRESENTS.

Table Cloths, Centre Pieces, Scarfs, Doylies, etc., Hand-embroidered and in Duchess, Renaissance and Point de Venise. All Sizes and Shapes.

1,400 Pieces of Hand-embroidered Doylies and Centre Pieces—round only.

9x9 inches, 48c. Each.
12x12 " 65c. "
18x18 " \$1.25 "
20x20 " 1.65 "
24x24 " 2.25 "
36x36 " 5.25 "

Nineteenth Street and Sixth Avenue.

ELECTRICAL CONTROL BOARD CENSURED.

MAGISTRATE DEUEL SAYS IT HAS BEEN NEGLIGENT IN ALLOWING AN OVERHEAD WIRE TO CROSS MADISON-AVE.

Magistrate Deuel in the Yorkville Police Court yesterday censured the Board of Electrical Control for allowing a wire to be kept strung across Madison-ave. for five years, and then ordering the arrest of men who tried to repair it. The case on trial was that of Patrick Sullivan, a driver, of No. 25 East Fifty-ninth-st., and John B. Parker, an electrician, of No. 113 Second-ave., who had been arrested on Friday at the instance of Andrew M. Cameron, an inspector of the Board of Electrical Control. Cameron was sent on Friday by Superintendent Brown of the Board of Electrical Control to Madison-ave. to cut a wire stretched across the avenue at Fifty-eighth-st. The wire ran between the Madison Avenue Hotel, the Savoy Hotel, the Lenox Lyceum and ex-Alderman Hall's stables, at Sixty-second-st. and Madison-ave., and was used to communicate with Mr. Hall's stable. The wire has mutilated with Mr. Hall's stable. Superintendent Brown told Cameron to cut it down, and wait there for a time. If any one came to repair it he was to be arrested. Cameron cut the wire, and soon Parker and Sullivan came to repair it. Cameron got Police-Prisoner of the East Fifty-first-st. station, to arrest the men, and they were arraigned in the Yorkville Court on the charge of violating the law which prohibits the strung of overhead wires. When the case had been explained to Magistrate Deuel he said: "These two men simply repaired a cut wire, which had been permitted to remain in existence with the knowledge of the Board of Electrical Control for five years. I regard the Board as negligent in not having enforced the law all this time. These men simply repaired the wire. They are innocent of any wrongdoing, and are discharged." The Board of Electrical Control is determined that the wire shall come down, and ex-Alderman Hall is as determined that it shall stay up, so that there is likely to be a prolonged legal fight over it.

NEW HOSPITAL CORPS MEMBERS.

NATIONAL GUARDSMEN WHO ARE ESPECIALLY FITTED TO AID THE SICK AND THE INJURED.

The following members of the various hospital corps of the organizations of the First Brigade have passed the prescribed examinations, in accordance with the regulations, and will be permitted to wear at all times the distinctive badge of the Hospital Corps of the State, as an indication of special fitness to aid the sick and injured under urgent circumstances.

Seventh Regiment—Corporals J. V. V. Colwell and Frederick M. Cutler, and Privates Frank Bu Bois, Lewis Englehard, Henry Russell and George Hallett.

Eighth Regiment—Privates George W. Lindheim and Samuel J. Kopetsky.

Ninth Regiment—Corporals Frederick Hirsch, Henry Ruddle and Harry Cole, and Privates Elbert G. Horton, Otto E. Smith and D. V. Hogan.

Twelfth Regiment—Corporals E. B. Burchall, W. D. Goodall and William Scott, and Privates J. D. Dory, Isaac Frank, J. Frank and William Ireland.

Twenty-second Regiment—Corporals Henry M. Grotto, E. K. Kern and Edward L. Purdy, and Privates Frank E. Dewey and Edward Reinhardt.

Sixty-ninth Regiment—Privates John Tracey, John McCauley, Thomas Dwan and John J. Schlosser.

Seventy-first Regiment—Corporals J. E. Jefferson and A. E. Canterbury, and Privates Charles O. Aniz, Roland B. Archer, Edward C. Dunne, J. James F. Fairman, Chauncey S. Hieck, William F. Hieck, Leon T. Lewald, Joseph M. Levy, Edward A. Robinson and A. S. John Shepard.

Squadron A—Privates C. S. Bryan and G. N. McKibbin.
First Signal Corps—Privates Harry Woodruff and A. J. Petrie.

FIRST BATTERY BALL.

The 1st Battery, Captain Louis Wendel, will celebrate its victory over the other artillery organizations at the State Camp, when it won the Flanagan trophy, by a military ball, which will take place at the armory, No. 30 West Forty-fourth-st., on Thursday evening. The military guests have been requested to appear in uniform, as many officers have accepted invitations. It is expected that the affair will be one of unusual brilliancy.

THE THEATRE OF MUSICAL ARTS NOW.

The entertainment of the Society of Musical Arts to-morrow evening will begin at 9 o'clock, instead of 9:30, as heretofore announced. In order to avoid confusion which may arise from the similarity of the name of this society and the Musical Arts Society, and in deference to the seniority of the latter, the Board of Directors has applied to the Secretary of State at Albany to have their name changed to that of Theatre of Musical Arts. Theobald Chartran has designed a frontispiece for the opening programmes.